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## VALUES AND MEANINGS OF CULTURE AS A FACTOR OF NATIONAL SECURITY

When the famous social philosopher V. M. Mezhuev characterized the 20th century as the century of culture [3] (by the way, this statement is also true for the 21st century), he mostly meant culture's ability to act as the main core, marker and driving force of the society in all its manifestations – starting from economy and technical development and ending with politics. The idea behind this statement is as follows: despite the importance of technological breakthroughs in convergent technologies and the digital transformation, advances in artificial intelligence and bioengineering, and economic takeoffs, the main driver of national development is primarily culture.

There are a number of reasons to that. *The first reason is that culture is a system that determines the normativity of any community* – not in its legal sense, but in its behavioral sense, where human activity correlates with a system of prescriptions that require compliance. And in this sense culture, as a functional system, is not less rigid than the legal system. Culture sets certain boundaries of human behavioral activity: everything within the boundaries has a positive content, and everything outside the boundaries is negative and subject to social disapproval.

The fear of disapproval of one's community compels one to adhere to the limits of what is permissible and to avoid committing dishonor – “not to do that which we disapprove in others,” according to Thales [2, c. 74]. In doing so, culture provides legitimacy to the goals one sets for oneself, their moral sanctioning, as well as the evaluation of all one's actions measured by the sense of personal responsibility. Strategizing one's life according to the moral code of one's nation, leading to public recognition and appreciation of that life by others, is one of the most important values contained within the boundaries of those cultures that have a connection to their traditional foundations. This concept of a moral code is inherent to virtually all peoples of Russia.

In the context of this understanding, culture can be seen as a system of regulation that influences human activity through a set of norms and traditions. Their acceptance means being aware of oneself as a member of that culture. Their rejection corresponds to a rejection of the very content of that culture, and in fact means a denial of the right worldview among the representatives of this nation and their misinterpretation of basic concepts; due to this disagreement, they are perceived as strangers and aliens, and therefore as enemies.

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Such an interpretation of culture as a normative environment expands its meaning from the domain of the beautiful (which is usually the first association with culture) to the sphere of social regulation, which forms the totality of norms and meanings that distinguishes one nation from another, one civilizational system from another.

*The second reason*, which enables us to consider culture not only as the main source of modern development, but also as a factor of national security, *is the value content of culture*. Today culture serves as the ideological core of military conflicts. Thus, the main goal of modern wars – conscientious, information, network-centric, cyber-wars – is the destruction of all ideological and value pillars, all symbols that give meaning to the existence of any nation. Victory in such wars correlates with the defense and protection of one's metaphysical values, one's image of the world and vision of the future.

To justify this, it is sufficient to recall the events of the Arab Spring, when traditional values were discredited by the opposing liberal values which were actively promoted by various nongovernmental organizations through a system of charity events and humanitarian projects. The ideals of liberalism and democracy, electoral and market rights, and individual freedom do not correspond in any way to those that prevail in traditional Eastern societies with their clan system. Personal freedom, which means primarily individual autonomy in the West, in the East implies a deep embeddedness in community affairs and coherence with its interests, the ability to bring prosperity to the community through the freedom to use its protection and support.

Equally different is the understanding of the value of justice, which turns out to be even more culturally and historically mediated. What is taken for granted is fundamentally different in the West and the East, being correlated with the entire way of life and corresponding to “certain conceptions of the essence of a human and his inalienable rights” [7, c. 650]. Unlike the West, the East considers fair all that is aimed at strengthening the community. In this context, the slogan of the Arab revolutions “Bread, Freedom, Social Justice,” to a certain extent prompted by American campaign strategists, reads differently, because the concepts of freedom and justice are integral for the value foundations underlying the systems of Western and Eastern ways of perception of the world. Replacing the connotations of these basic values without replacing the concepts themselves is an effective mechanism for destroying the value systems of traditionalist states.

This gives reason to consider culture in terms of its value content as one of the leading, strategically important factors of national security of any state in the modern world.

Today, when the special military operation is being carried out, Russia's values are criticized, and Russian masterpieces that have long been part of the golden treasury of the world culture – works by F. M. Dostoyevsky, L. N. Tolstoy, P. I. Tchaikovsky and others – are hastily withdrawn and discredited. In the situation when Russia confronts geopolitical expansion of NATO and the European Union, it is clear that this confrontation has a strong value component.

Comparison of such fundamental documents as the National Security Strategies of Russia and the United States confirms this thesis. The U.S. Strategy adopted in 2015 under President B. Obama defines the need to “shape the contours of a new world economic order that will continue to reflect our interests and values” [4]. American values include equality, democracy, freedom of speech and religion, the American way of life, the rule of law, human rights, and the protection of communities such as “ethnic and religious minorities, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, displaced persons, and migrant workers” [Ibid]. The 2017 Strategy, adopted under D. Trump, postulates that protecting the American way of life serves as one of the four pillars (along with developing American prosperity, preserving peace through strength, and advancing American influence) [5] whose preservation constitutes a national priority.

Importantly, Strategy 2017 also presents values as the essence of the American way of life, as something that “contributes to the strength, stability, and prosperity of sovereign nations” [Ibid], as something that needs to be protected. Its emphasis is that American values are seen as universal, “overarching,” *requiring distribution and implementation*. And these cultural codes, including freedom and democracy understood in a liberal way, human rights without limits, property and welfare, determine the context of information wars in their hard and soft forms and constitute the content of network communication, mass culture products, and new communication patterns. These codes become the ideological basis of the information war the West is actively waging against Russia. The Interim National Security Strategic Guidance published in 2021 outlines the vectors of America’s development that build on the provisions of previous strategic planning documents [1].

Russian values are “life, dignity, human rights and freedoms, patriotism, citizenship, service to Homeland and responsibility for its fate, high moral ideals, strong family, creative labor, priority of the spiritual over the material, humanism, mercy, justice, collectivism, mutual assistance and mutual respect, historic memory and continuity of generations, the unity of the peoples of Russia” [6]. These values are traditional, i.e. historically shaped, permeating the history of Russia since day one but still relevant to date. They are inherent to all peoples of our country and act as an integrating power forming the national identity of Russia.

It is important that the values in the Russian National Security Strategy 2021 are defined as those enshrined in the Constitution of the Russian Federation and “forming the basis of Russian society, national security, further development of Russia as a social state under the rule of law, in which respect and protection of human and civil rights and freedoms, improvement of the well-being of people, protection of the dignity of Russian citizens are of utmost importance” [Ibid].

The purpose of conscientious warfare is to influence the mind of the enemy in order to change his basic orientations and destroy his system of values. In this regard, one of the main goals of the state is to bring up new generations of

citizens in a spirit of respect for the culture of their people and to form their ability to understand the causes and consequences of events, to independently assess any information distributed through communication channels, and to subject it to critical reflection. This is necessary in the situation when traditional Russian values are subjected to communicational and psychological influence with a purpose of replacing them with fundamentally different ones. Russian values are the ones intensely influenced and constantly attacked by the United States and its allies who seek to deliberately “Westernize” Russian culture. It is actually defined as one of the goals of the U.S. Strategy: “To effectively lead in a world undergoing significant political changes, the United States must remain true to our values at home and advance universal values abroad” [4].

Consequently, loss of values, assumption of distortion of history, devaluation of spiritual significance of great personalities and heroes, weakening of the state-forming ethnos, discrediting of the Russian language – all this carries the threat of losing not just culture, but the sovereignty of Russia. On the contrary, preservation of these spiritual foundations makes it possible to strengthen its sovereignty and move toward new advances in human and social development.

The basis of Russia’s identity is its moral values and meanings shared by the Russian people, their spiritual content and the path of great service, which has always opposed the pragmatism and utilitarianism of the West. It is the great culture that is the source of our spiritual strength and inspiration in the defense of Russia and its further development.

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